

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~striketrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claims 8, 11 and 15, and AMEND claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 12 and 16-18 in accordance with the following:

1. (Currently Amended) An information providing method for providing provision information which is to be provided and registered in a central apparatus in response to a request from plural terminal devices which are connected to said central apparatus by a communication network, comprising:

accepting, by one terminal device, as one set of data provision information, recipient information relating to a recipient who is authorized to receive said provision information, and a provision format of said provision information to be applied to said recipient, the provision format including a portable document format which is converted from provision information at the terminal device and an original format which is not converted from provision information;

transmitting, by said one terminal device to said central apparatus, the one set of data after said accepting;

registering, in said central apparatus, the one set of data after said transmitting;

receiving, by said central apparatus, a request and recipient information of a recipient who generated the request transmitted from one of the terminal devices; and

providing, by said central apparatus to said one of the terminal devices which transmitted the request and the recipient information, the provision information in the portable document format or the original format corresponding to the provision format based on the recipient information registered in the one set of data.

2. (Currently Amended) An information providing system for providing provision information to be provided, comprising:

a central apparatus in which provision information is registered; and
plural terminal devices which are connected to said central apparatus by a communication network, and issue a request for receiving provision information, wherein one terminal device includes a processor capable of performing the following operations of:

accepting, as one set of data, provision information, recipient information relating to a recipient who is authorized to receive said provision information, and a provision format of said provision information to be applied to said recipient, the provision format including a portable document format which is converted from provision information at the terminal device and an original format which is not converted from provision information; and

transmitting, after said accepting, the one set of data to said central apparatus;
and

said central apparatus includes a processor capable of performing the following operations of:

registering the one set of data transmitted from said one terminal device;

receiving a request and recipient information of a recipient who generated the request transmitted from one of said terminal devices; and

providing, to the one of said terminal devices which transmitted the request and the recipient information, the provision information in the portable document format or the original format corresponding to the provision format based on the recipient information registered in the one set of data.

Claim 3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously Presented) The information providing system as set forth in Claim 2, wherein

said processor of said one terminal device is further capable of performing an operation of accepting, as part of the one set of data, name disclosure information indicating whether or not a name of provider who provides the provision information to be disclosed;

said operation of transmitting further transmitting the name disclosure information as part of the one set of data;

said operation of registering further registering the name disclosure information as part of the one set of data; and

said operation of providing further providing to the one of said terminal devices which transmitted the request and the recipient information, a name of provider based on the recipient information and the name disclosure information registered in the one set of data.

Claim 5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) The information providing system as set forth in Claim 2, wherein

said operation of registering further registering, as part of the one set of data, auxiliary provision information whose information volume is reduced from said transmitted provision information;

said processor of said central apparatus is further capable of performing an operation of judging whether a request from the one of said terminal devices is transmitted through said network or through another network different from said network; and

said operation of providing further providing auxiliary provision information, according to the provision format registered in the one set of data, to the one of said terminal devices based on the recipient information registered in the one set of data when it is judged that the one of said terminal devices transmits the request through the other network.

Claims 7 and 8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A central apparatus for providing registered provision information to be provided in response to a request from a computer, comprising a processor capable of performing the following operations of:

registering, as one set of data, a provision information, recipient information relating to a recipient who is authorized to receive said provision information, and a provision format of said provision information to be applied to said recipient transmitted from exterior, the provision format including a portable document format which is converted from provision information at the terminal device and an original format which is not converted from provision information;

receiving a recipient information transmitted from another computer; and

providing to the other computer the provision information in the portable document format or the original format corresponding to the provision format based on the recipient information registered in the one set of data.

10. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program that when executed causes a computer to provide registered provision information to be provided in response to a request from a computer, according to a method comprising:

causing a first computer to register, as one set of data, provision information, recipient information relating to a recipient who is authorized to receive said provision information, and a provision format of said provision information to be applied to said recipient transmitted from exterior, the provision format including a portable document format which is converted from provision information at the terminal device and an original format which is not converted from provision information;

causing the first computer to receive transmitted recipient information from a second computer; and

causing the first computer to provide to the second computer the provision information in the portable document format or the original format corresponding to the provision format based on the recipient information registered in the one set of data.

Claim 11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) An information providing system for providing provision information to be provided, comprising:

a central apparatus in which provision information is registered; and
plural terminal devices which are connected to said central apparatus by a communication network and issues a request for receiving provision information, wherein one terminal device includes:

means for accepting, as one set of data, provision information, recipient information relating to a recipient who is authorized to receive said provision information, and a provision format of said provision information to be applied to said recipient, the provision format including a portable document format which is converted from provision information at the terminal device and an original format which is not converted from provision information; and

means for transmitting the one set of data to said central apparatus; and
said central apparatus includes:

means for registering the one set of data transmitted from said one terminal device;

means for receiving a request and recipient information of a recipient who generated the request transmitted from one of said terminal devices; and

means for providing, to the one of said terminal devices which transmitted the request and the recipient information, registered provision information in the portable document format or the original format corresponding to the provision format based on the recipient information registered in the one set of data.

13. (Previously Presented) The information providing system as set forth in Claim 12, wherein

said one terminal device further including means for accepting, as part of the one set of data, name disclosure information indicating whether or not a name of provider who provides the provision information to be disclosed;

said means for transmitting further transmitting said accepted name disclosure information as part of the one set of data;

said means for registering further registering a name disclosure information as part of the one set of data; and

said means for providing further providing, to the one of said terminal devices which transmitted the request and the recipient information, a name of provider based on the recipient information and the name disclosure information registered in the one set of data.

14. (Previously Presented) The information providing system as set forth in Claim 12, wherein

said means for registering further registering, as part of the one set of data, auxiliary provision information whose information volume is reduced from the provision information transmitted by said transmitting means;

said central apparatus further including means for judging whether a request from the one of said terminal devices is transmitted through said network or through another network different from said network; and

said means for providing further providing the auxiliary provision information, according to the provision format registered in the one set of data, to the one of said terminal devices based on the recipient information registered in the one set of data when it is judged that the one of said terminal devices transmits the request through the other network.

Claim 15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) A central apparatus for providing registered provision information to be provided in response to a request of a computer, comprising:

means for registering, as one set of data, provision information, recipient information relating to a recipient who is authorized to receive said provision information, and a provision format of said provision information to be applied to said recipient transmitted from exterior, the provision format including a portable document format which is converted from provision information at the exterior and an original format which is not converted from provision information;

means for receiving recipient information transmitted from another computer; and

means for providing to said computer which transmitted said recipient information the provision information in the portable document format or the original format corresponding to the provision format based on the recipient information registered in the one set of data.

17. (Currently Amended) A method for providing requested information to authorized recipients, comprising:

receiving, from any user who is authorized to store format information for provision information, the format information for each authorized recipient of the provision information, the format information indicating at least one provision format selected from among at least an original format and a portable document format;

storing, as one set of data in computer-readable storage accessible by at least one server, the provision information stored in ~~an~~ the original format and ~~a~~ the portable document format converted from the provision information at a terminal device and accessible by the authorized recipients, recipient information indicating ~~what~~ in the provision information each of the authorized recipients is authorized to receive, and the format information corresponding to the provision information and the recipient information ~~indicating in what format the provision information can be provided to each of the authorized recipients;~~

receiving, by the at least one server from a requesting terminal device, a request for at least one item of the provision information and a recipient identifier; and

transmitting, from the at least one server towards the requesting terminal device, requested provision information in the portable document format or the original format corresponding to a registered provision format if the recipient information indicates that permission to access the requested provision information in the registered provision format has been granted to the recipient identifier.

18. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 17, further comprising:

receiving, by the at least one server from a providing terminal device, a provider name for a provider of new provision information; and

accepting, by the at least one server for storage in the computer-readable storage if the provider name is authorized according to the recipient information, the new provision information, authorized recipient information identifying at least one recipient who is authorized to receive the new provision information, and at least one indication of an authorized format in which the new provision information is to be provided to the at least one recipient, the authorized format including at least ~~an~~ the original format of the new provision information and a the portable document format converted from the new provision information